

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-07 IO-13 TRSE-00
/097 W

-----251905Z 107244 /41

P R 251833Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1044
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
USMISSION USUN
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 08880

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, FT, FR
SUBJECT: FURTHER FRENCH VIEWS ON THE FTAI

REF: PARIS 833L, PARIS 8274 (BOTH NOTAL)

SUMMARY: THE FRENCH ARE NOT DISHEARTENED BY THE RESULTS
OF THE RECENT FTAI ROUNDTABLE IN PARIS WHICH, AFTER CON-
SIDERABLE WRANGLING AND SOME DEFECTIONS, SET MAY 8 FOR
THE FTAI REFERENDUM ON INDEPENDENCE AND FOR CHAMBER ELEC-
TIONS, AND JUNE 27 FOR INDEPENDENCE. THE QUESTION
OF AN AFAR BOYCOTT OF THE THE VOTING REMAINS OPEN. THE
MARCH 28 OAU GATHERING ON DJIBOUTI AT ACCRA MAY GIVE AN
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INDICATION OF WHETHER UNITY AMONG FTAI FACTIONS, ESSEN-
TIAL TO FRENCH PLANS TO TRANSFER AUTHORITY PEACEFULLY,
IS POSSIBLE. THE GOF THINKS THAT ALL FACTIONS DESIRE A
POST-INDEPENDENCE MILITARY AGREEMENT, BUT DETAILS ARE IN
THE AIR. THE FRENCH CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT ETHIOPIA
IS MORE LIKELY THAN SOMALIA TO TAKE PRECIPITATE ACTION.
END SUMMARY.

1. WE NOW HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE RECENT ROUNDTABLE TALKS ON THE FTAI WITH A NUMBER OF FRENCH OFFICIALS, INCLUDING QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA, CLAUDE HAREL, THE PM'S COORDINATOR FOR THE FTAI, JEAN-JACQUES ROBERT, AND THE PM'S INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ADVISER, MICHEL DE BONNECORSE. THE AGREEMENT ON ELECTIONS FINALLY CONCLUDED ON MARCH 19 AMONG THE LPAI, THE TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT AND THE FRENCH (THE FLCS AND SENATOR BARAKAT HAVING WITHDRAWN FROM THE MEETING), PROVIDES FOR THE SIMULTANEOUS HOLDING OF THE REFERENDUM AND CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES ELECTIONS ON MAY 8. THE GOF WILL SUBMIT TO PARLIAMENT A BILL PROVIDING FOR: THE DISSOLUTION OF THE CURRENT FTAI CHAMBER; THE ELECTION OF 65 DEPUTIES FROM A SINGLE ELECTORAL DISTRICT COMPRISING THE ENTIRE TERRITORY, AND INDEPENDENCE ON JUNE 27, IF THE VOTE GOES AS EXPECTED IN THE REFERENDUM.

2. THE FRENCH APPEAR TO BE PARTIALLY SATISFIED WITH THESE RESULTS, EVEN THOUGH THE FLCS, BARAKAT AND THE AFAR FACTIONS (UNI, MLD AND MPL) ARE NOT ASSOCIATED WITH THE AGREEMENT. DESPITE THE CLEAR DIVISIONS AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS, BASED INTER ALIA ON FEARS OF FACING THE ELECTORATE AND TRIBAL CONSIDERATIONS, THE FRENCH PERCEIVED A GROWING, IF STILL EMBRYONIC SENSE OF WANTING TO BE DJIBOUTIANS. AS CONCEIVED, THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS SHOULD RESULT IN A CHAMBER ABOUT EQUALLY DIVIDED BETWEEN AFARS AND ISSAS, AN OUTCOME THE FRENCH BELIEVE ESSENTIAL IF EACH GROUP IS TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE OTHER. BUT THIS

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COMPROMISE CAUSED RESENTMENT AMONG SOME DELEGATES, NOTABLY FLCS REPRESENTATIVES, AND OTHERS, INCLUDING BARAKAT, REMAIN OPPOSED TO ELECTIONS PER SE.

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SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 IO-13

/097 W

-----251905Z 107696 /41

P R 251851Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1045

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 08880

3. THE IMPORTANT QUESTION NOW, AS ROBERT PUT IT, IS WHETHER ALL GROUPS WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE MAY 8 CONSULTATION. IF THE AFARS, ON THE HEELS OF THE ACCRA OAU MEETING ON DJIBOUTI LATE THIS MONTH, DECIDE TO BOYCOTT THE ELECTIONS, THEN THE WHOLE DELICATE STRUCTURE FOR A PEACEFUL TRANSITION WILL BE ENDANGERED. HAREL SAID THAT THE FRENCH REMAIN PERPLEXED OVER HOW THE AFRICANS INTEND TO BRING PRESSURES FOR UNITY ON THE FTAI FACTIONS AT ACCRA, BUT ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE ASSURANCES GIVEN BY THE GHANAIAAN AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE, TURKSON, THAT HIS CONFIDENTIAL

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GOVERNMENT FULLY SUPPORTS FRENCH EFFORTS AND WILL WORK DURING THE ROUNDTABLE TO PROMOTE THEM.

4. WE UNDERSTAND THAT LITTLE ATTENTION WAS DEVOTED AT THE ROUNDTABLE TO THE POST-INDEPENDENCE FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE BECAUSE OF THE TIME-CONSUMING CONFLICT ABOUT ELECTIONS. NONTHELESS, THE QUAI SAYS THAT ALL FACTIONS CONTINUE TO PROFESS THE DESIRE FOR A MILITARY AGREEMENT, AND THAT THE FRENCH OFFER FOR EITHER MILITARY ADVISERS OR A SEVERAL THOUSAND-MAN FORCE STANDS. NEGOTIATIONS ON OTHER BILATERAL AGREEMENTS FOR ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL, FINANCIAL AND CULTURAL COOPERATION WILL BE ACTIVELY PURSUED DURING THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

5. DESPITE UNEASINESS CAUSED BY THE SPLIT OF THE FLCS FROM THE PARIS MEETING, OUR FRENCH INTERLOCUTERS STILL APPEAR LESS CONCERNED BY POSSIBLE SOMALI-INSPIRED TROUBLES THAN BY THE ACTION ETHIOPIA MIGHT TAKE AT THE MOMENT OF INDEPENDENCE. THEY ALL BELIEVE THAT SOMALI-SOVIET RELATIONS ARE CURRENTLY STRAINED (ALTHOUGH FRENCH OFFICIAL OPINION IS DIVIDED OVER THE SERIOUSNESS OF THAT SITUATION AND THE LIKLIHOOD OF SWITCHING ALLIANCES IN THE AREA) AND THAT THIS WILL ENCOURAGE SOMALI CAUTION. BUT THE SPECTOR OF SOME ETHIOPIAN COLONEL'S STARTING A LOCAL CONFLICT WHICH WOULD RAPIDLY ESCALATE CONTINUES TO HAUNT THEM AND THEY CONSIDER ETHIOPIA'S DIPLOMATIC STANCE AT ACCRA AND SUBSEQUENTLY UNPREDICTABLE.

6. THE FRENCH HAVE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OUR DECISION TO ESTABLISH A CONSULATE AT DJIBOUTI, ONLY ONE OF THEM (HAREL) SUGGESTING LIGHTLY THAT A POST-REFERENDUM OPENING MIGHT BE DESIREABLE.
GAMMON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, INDEPENDENCE, POLICIES, POLITICAL SITUATION, SELFDETERMINATION, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARIS08880
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770103-0318
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770322/aaaaasha.tel
Line Count: 190
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4535d0b1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 PARIS 833, 77 PARIS 8274
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2996211
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FURTHER FRENCH VIEWS ON THE FTAI
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, FT, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4535d0b1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009